

PATENT
Docket NCR-8778

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant:
M. R. Bauer

Art Unit: 3627

Application No.: 09/556,647
Confirmation No: 7493

Examiner: Fischer, A.

Filed: 04/24/2000

Title: Material Browser

PETITION UNDER RULE 144
RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT (MPEP 821)

Group Director
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Official

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JUL 23 2003

GROUP 3600

Sir:

In response to the final office action dated as mailed on 06/06/03, and having a period of response extending through and including 09/06/03, Applicant hereby petitions under 37 CFR 1.144 (MPEP 821) the final restriction requirement.

Since an appeal of the final rejection will be filed in due course, Applicant also requests an **EXPEDITED** decision of this petition so that the restricted claims may be timely examined and added to the appeal to resolve all issues in the subject application without need for independent appeals of the restricted claims.

As a convenience, all remaining claims have been reproduced in the appendix hereto.

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION (37 CFR 1.8a and MPEP 512)

I hereby certify that this **24-PAGE** correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office at Fax No. 703-872-9327 on the transmission date indicated below.

FRANCIS L. CONTE
(Name of person transmitting paper)


(Signature of person transmitting paper)

23 JULY 2003
(Transmission date)

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REMARKS

The prosecution of the subject application is quite protracted.

The first office action dated 08/02/2002 contains nine (9) pages of numerous adverse findings by the examiner, including action on the merits of original claims 1-14.

A supplemental office action dated 09/24/2003 resolved the examiner's failure to consider the IDS; except that the examiner has yet to provide an initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 therefor.

An amendment was filed on 10/21/2002 amending certain claims, and adding claims 15-30.

A second office action restriction requirement was mailed on 12/17/2002 presenting four groups of method and apparatus claims.

A second amendment was filed on 01/09/2003 traversing the restriction requirement; amending claims 15 and 22 (first occurrence); and re-introducing new claims 31-39 to replace the incorrectly numbered claims 22 (second occurrence)-30.

A third and final office action was mailed on 03/27/2003 making final the restriction requirement, and rejecting the remaining claims 22 and 31-39 using eleven (11) additional pages of adverse findings.

Because the final office action contained clear examples of incomplete review and failure to afford due weight to express claim language, this attorney made several phone calls to the USPTO leading to acting supervisor M. Cuff. In a phone interview conducted with supervisor Cuff on 04/29/03, various options were discussed in promoting the expeditious prosecution of the application.

For example, the examiner's failure to afford due weight to the statutorily permitted "means for" language addressed in paras. 8-11 of the office action was discussed along with the corresponding requirements of MPEP 2181.

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In para. 11 of the office action the examiner requested the Applicant to "expressly state" the desire to invoke Section 112, 6th para; yet the Applicant expressly so-stated this invocation at page 26, 4th para., of the first amendment as follows:

Claims 22-26 & 30 are apparatus claims corresponding with method claims 15-21, reciting features in the means-for terms of Section 112, 6th para.

And, at page 10 of the second amendment Applicant additionally stated that: "... it is noted that apparatus claim 22 is the means-for equivalent of method claim 15 under MPEP 809.03...."

Discussed further were the special requirements for examining computer-related inventions under MPEP 2106 found wanting in the final office action.

And, discussed yet further was the modicum of references of record relating to computer inventions, for which a supplemental search might be warranted.

The phone interview was ended with the scheduling of a phone interview with supervisor Cuff for May 8th to discuss the various issues to promote the prosecution.

However, supervisor Cuff called this attorney on April 30th to indicate that examiner Fischer was agreeable to review the matter, withdraw the final office action, and present yet another office action, with the possibility of a phone interview prior thereto. The May 8th interview was therefore canceled.

The present, fourth office action, and second final, was mailed on 06/06/2002 copying substantially verbatim the first final office action; yet adding the objection to the specification in para. 5; adding the rejection under Section 112 in paras. 6 & 7; and adding remarks in paras. 14 and 18-26, for example.

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It is also noted that the examiner is using the same art of record without additional search results; and has failed to address the special computer-related provisions of MPEP 2106.

Relevant to the restriction requirement, for example, is the examiner's complete failure to address Applicant's remarks in the second amendment traversing that restriction. Indeed, claim 15 was expressly amended to introduce the "computer system" in accordance with the "safe harbors" provision of MPEP 2106, at page 2100-15; and thereby render moot the examiner's fundamental "by hand" basis found in paras. 9-14 of the restriction requirement.

Neither final rejection paper addresses this fundamental shortcoming; and should therefore render the restriction requirement fatally defective for failure to comply with the applicable MPEP requirements.

Applicant now petitions the restriction requirement, and traverses the examiner's various contentions in support thereof found in the 12/17/02 office action.

More specifically, Applicant traverses the examiner's contentions in para. 2 of that paper since the examiner's contention that "querying the user for seller input" is not a different process at all, let alone a materially different process. Both claims 1 and 8 recite substantially verbatim the same user input query, and the examiner's contention does not show otherwise, and is quite inconsistent with the features being claimed, see MPEP 806.05(e). ★

The examiner's example of "seller input" falls clearly within the very language of the recited "user input comprises..." and is therefore without distinction or merit.

In para. 3 of the final office action, the examiner conspicuously avoids this fatal defect by instead merely arguing that: "[t]his is not persuasive because Applicant has not argued that the processes are 'patentably distinct.'" The examiner further contends that "... Applicant previously argued the claims were patentably distinct," citing footnote

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1.

And, at para. 3 of the 12/17/02 office action the examiner merely stated that "... Applicant has inherently argued the separate patentability of the groups and therefore that the groups are patentably distinct."

This is quite distorted logic, which distortions are found replete in the examiner's many papers, and voluminous remarks, and myriad citations to footnotes and case law without due regard to the facts or specificity thereof.

The statute is the statute, the Rules are the Rules, the MPEP is the MPEP, and case law is case law. They are applied expressly by their very language, and by the various historical interpretation thereof. The examiner continually overlooks the express requirements of the very language, and jumps to unsupported conclusions based on generalities without due regard to the express claim language, and without due regard to Applicant's traversing remarks.

In para. 2 of the restriction requirement, the examiner expressly invoked MPEP 806.05(e), and in response thereto Applicant traversed the use thereof. Where then in MPEP 806.05(e) is the examiner's requirement of "patentably distinct" written? How is the examiner's expedient of invoking such feature controlling to the restriction issue? What authority permits the examiner to disregard the express requirements of MPEP 806.05(e), or other MPEP provisions?

The analysis is plain and simple: is there any validity to the examiner's contention in para. 2 that: "[i]n this case, the apparatus can be practiced with a materially different process, one that would include querying the user for seller input?" This is the test of MPEP 806.05(e).

This is the test which the examiner has failed to meet.

This is the test which the examiner has failed to address in response to the Applicant's traverse; contending instead that some "patentably distinct" test has been met or admitted to.

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The examiner's various attempts to attribute to Applicant certain admissions, when no such admissions have been made is strongly traversed for any and all such contentions found in any and all the office actions.

The examiner always has the burden of proof in the examination process; and Applicant need only point out the errors therewith. To attribute to the Applicant specific "admissions" when no such admissions have been made is unwarranted and is clear error.

To the extent the examiner attempts to rely on such "admissions" then those "admissions" should be reproduced by the examiner in quotation marks, and then provided with some logical nexus to a relevant issue being addressed.

It is quite clear that the examiner has his own opinion and standard of invoking the applicable statutory and regulatory provisions, and case law, which are clearly subject to different, and opposite interpretations: this is why we are now before the Group Director to decide this Petition; and why we will shortly be before the Board of Appeal to decide the appeal; and why we might yet again be before the Board of Appeal three more times in the event relief is not granted on this Petition to rejoin the restricted claims for one and only one review by the Board, whose backlog is typically three years long.

* In para. 3a of the final office action (there being no para. 3b) the examiner apparently disregards the substance of the "substantially verbatim" correspondence of method claim 1 and apparatus claim 8 relevant to the examiner's burden under MPEP 806.05(e).

Instead, the examiner yet again merely argues "patentably distinct" without regard to MPEP 806.05(e).

The examiner also argues that "... the elected Groups consists [a term of art being misused here by the examiner] of language potentially invoking 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph."

What is the relevance of these contentions to the

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restriction requirement?

In paras. 18-26 the examiner conducts an exhaustive review of MPEP 2181 and determines that the "means for" expressions indeed invoke 35 U.S.C 112, 6th para. How then does the examiner reconcile this factual determination of the invocation of Section 112, 6th para, with the restriction position that the Groups only "potentially" invoke this provision? Which is it? The examiner cannot argue both ways.

Let's return to the MPEP 806.05(e) "materially different process," and the "substantially verbatim" correspondence of method claim 1 and apparatus claim 8 in the Group I and II restriction requirement.

Claim 1 recites a computer implemented method for selecting a raw material (overlooked by the examiner in para 1 of the restriction requirement); and claim 8 recites a computer system for selecting a material.

Claim 1 recites querying the user for user input, which, of course is in the computer recited in the preamble; and claim 8 recites the processor and memory of the computer having stored therein the instructions for querying the user for a user input.

Claim 1 recites that the user input comprises: "a customer application criteria selection and raw material type selection based upon applying a filter of customer application criteria to a list of raw material types, with each of said raw material types having various customer application criteria," and claim 8 recites the identical feature.

Claim 1 further recites that:

if said user input is (a) a raw material selection, displaying raw material information; and
if said user input is (b) a customer application criteria selection, displaying (1) a list of raw material types for user selection filtered by said customer application criteria selection and (2) said customer application criteria selection;

and claim 8 similarly recites:

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if said user input is a raw material selection, displaying raw material information; and
if said user input is a customer application criteria selection, displaying a **filtered** list of raw material types for user selection filtered by said customer application criteria selection and said customer application criteria selection.

Note the **bold** differences between these two claims.

Applicant previously argued (page 5 of the second amendment) that method claim 1 and apparatus claims 8 recite **substantially verbatim** features for overcoming the "materially different process" test in MPEP 806.05(e). The examiner merely claimed "unawareness" of such standard without regard to the express claim language of these claims, without regard to the express standard of MPEP 806.05(e), and without regard to Applicant's good faith response.

This simple listing of the express features recited in claims 1 and 8 clearly shows the "substantial" similarity between the method and corresponding apparatus, both implemented in specifically configured computers.

How then has the examiner met his burden of proof under MPEP 806.05(e)? "Querying the user for seller input" is clearly without merit; especially in view of the previous traverse thereof, and the examiner's additional opportunity to objectively evaluate the traverse.

Regarding para. 3, the examiner's failure to afford due weight to express claim language is not supported by the MPEP or patent law, and the examiner has failed to show that the 1959 Danly case is relevant. Computer implemented claims require special evaluation by the examiner, as well explained in MPEP 2106, and Danly clearly predates modern analysis of computer-implemented claims.

MPEP 2173.05(g) clearly states that "[t]here is nothing inherently wrong with defining some part of an invention in functional terms."

MPEP 2181 states in substantial detail the statutorily permitted use of means-plus-function expressions.

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Yet, the examiner, citing the 1959 Danly case without regard to the facts thereof, suggests that he has not given any ("not necessarily") weight to the functional features in the "product" claims.

In mere conclusion, without due regard to MPEP 806.05(e) etc.; without regard to the express claim language; without regard to the clear interpretation of the method and corresponding apparatus claim; and without regard to the explicit traverse, the examiner merely contends: "The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL."

Final or not, the restriction requirement for Groups I and II clearly cannot be sustained under this petition on the basis of the examiner's proffered reasons; and therefore must be overturned.

The examiner's search contention in para. 4 is not relevant to restriction practice, and is incorrect as evidenced by the previous examination of the group I and II claims. The references previously applied by the examiner have not been listed in the form PTO-892 as found in the search field identified in para. 1.

Accordingly, the examiner has failed to establish a basis to restrict under groups I and II, which restriction must be withdrawn.

The examiner's contention in para. 5 is erroneous: the groups I and III are both clearly combination claims, not subcombination claims, and the examiner's use of MPEP 806.05(d) is without merit.

Note that claims 1 and 15 recite related computer-implemented methods both of which result in the same output: displaying a filtered list of raw materials. The examiner's example of "market research tool" is clearly not excluded by these methods, but, to the contrary, falls within the broad scope of both claims.

The examiner's contentions in para. 6 have not been

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supported by any evidence, and, to the contrary, the examiner's previous listing of field search in the PTO-892 is contra to the examiner's contention of search fields.

Accordingly, the examiner has failed to establish a basis to restrict under groups I and III, which restriction must be withdrawn.

The examiner's contentions in para. 7 are erroneous since the examiner has failed to show a materially different apparatus, or that the apparatus "does not require the equivalent of the corresponding structure of the means for populating."

The examiner has overlooked the populating means itself which provides filter lists for the customer application criteria for the raw materials.

In direct correspondence, claim 1 recites customer application criteria, raw material type, and selection based upon applying a filter. How will the filter in claim 1 be implemented without a corresponding means for populating the filter? The examiner has overlooked this in his rush to maintain the restriction requirement.

It is quite incongruous for the examiner to contend the populating "means" element of claim 22 lacks an "equivalent" in claim 1, when it is notoriously common practice for the USPTO to afford "means for" elements extraordinarily broad interpretation when rejecting claims over the art. And, the method recited in claim 1 necessarily requires population of the filter as described in the specification.

The examiner is attempting to interpret the claims in a technical vacuum, without due regard to the sophisticated function thereof effected in a computer system. Merely arguing a "negative", i.e. "does not require...", does not support the positive showing required under the MPEP standard.

It is not seen how the common examination practice of broadly construing means elements can be ignored for applying an unreasonably narrow interpretation of the claim 1 method

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solely for restriction practice, as the examiner has done.

The examiner's contention in para. 8 have not been supported by any evidence, and, to the contrary, the examiner's previous listing of field search in the PTO-892 is contra to the examiner's contention of search fields.

Accordingly, the examiner has failed to establish a basis to restrict under groups I and IV, which restriction must be withdrawn.

The examiner's contention in para. 9 regarding the group II and III claims is clearly erroneous, and lacks technical credibility. The rote recitation of "by hand using index cards and a pencil" in no way establishes even the possibility that the complex process elements of claim 15 could be practiced by hand in a materially different process.

How are the index cards and pencil to be used for the disparate process elements of claim 15? The examiner has not explained this, because it is inexplicable.

Perhaps the different raw materials are listed by pencil on an index card. Where then are the other elements of claim 15 in the examiner's bald contention?

How are filter lists populated with the same or different index cards, and the same or different pencil?

How is a "material browser" displayed with the index cards and pencil, and how are the filters and lists thereof displayed?

How is one of the filter lists selected using the index cards and pencil?

How is the list of raw materials filtered by the index cards and pencil?

And then, how is the filtered list displayed in "said browser" by the index cards and pencil?

The examiner's mere contention for restriction purposes is clearly trivial, erroneous, and lacking in merit by failing to address the multiplicity of elements recited in claim 15. Clearly, the examiner has failed to meet the MPEP

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requirements.

The examiner's contentions in para. 10 have not been supported by any evidence, and, to the contrary, the examiner's previous listing of field search in the PTO-892 is contra to the examiner's contention of search fields.

Nevertheless, Applicant has previously amended claim 15 in direct response to the restriction requirement to introduce the computer system (see MPEP 2106 as referenced above), as similarly recited in claim 8, to further render moot the examiner's simplistic use of index cards.

Notwithstanding this amendment, the examiner has conspicuously failed to address in the final office action this significant amendment which clearly renders his previous contention moot.

Accordingly, the examiner has failed to establish a basis to restrict under groups II and III, which restriction must be withdrawn.

The examiner's contentions in para. 11 are clearly erroneous since both claims 8 and 22 are combination claims having similar performance in displaying a filtered list of raw materials or types. MPEP 806.05(c) is not relevant, and the examiner has not shown otherwise.

Furthermore, the examiner's narrow interpretation of the populating means is not supported by the MPEP, or by the notoriously common broad USPTO evaluation of means elements and their broad "equivalents."

And, the examiner's contention is erroneous. The populating means in claim 22 provides the filter lists for the customer application criteria for the different raw materials.

Correspondingly, claim 8 recites a computer system having a processor and memory which are inherently, if not expressly, configured to contain the customer application criteria, different raw material type, and associated filter.

Claim 8 expressly recites "applying a filter," so how can that filter be applied without first populating the filter

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list?

On what evidentiary basis, or logical basis, does the examiner contend that claim 8 lacks "the equivalents of the corresponding structure of the means for populating?" Mere examiner argument is never evidence; nor necessarily logical, as the examiner repeatedly emphasizes in incomplete and incongruous contentions being made.

The examiner's further contention in para. 11 that the "subcombination has separate utility such as a generic personal computer" does not appear to have any relevance whatsoever to claims 8 and 22, or to MPEP 806.05(c) and is inconsistent with the examiner's contention in para. 13 that the "method [of group IV] could be performed by hand using index cards and a pencil."

Which then is it: "generic personal computer" or "by hand using index cards and a pencil?"

The examiner's yet further contention in para. 11 that "generic personal computers could be used to keep a list of available raw materials that are purchasable readily on hand," is indicative of the examiner's failure to afford any weight, let alone, due weight to computer-implemented inventions having special examination requirements in the MPEP.

Is it the examiner's opinion that no "generic personal computer" is patentable, notwithstanding the specific software therein since any and all types of software "could be used?" If so, this is clear legal error.

The MPEP, and case law, make quite clear that even generic personal computers are patentable when programmed to perform specific tasks. The examiner is apparently disregarding the "function" of computer operation (see para. 3) in an erroneous interpretation of the MPEP and case law to not only avoid the examination of the restricted claims, but, of course, to continue to reject claims, without due regard to the evidentiary requirements, MPEP requirements, and case law holdings.

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It is quite clear that the examiner's interpretation of the claims for restriction purposes and examination purposes is interwoven, with the clear errors poisoning both processes.

This petition will decide the restriction; and the separate appeal will decide the rejections. Perhaps, the results of this petition may be used to advantage in reducing the issues on appeal.

The examiner's contentions in para. 12 have not been supported by any evidence, and, to the contrary, the examiner's previous listing of field search in the PTO-892 is contra to the examiner's contention of search fields.

Accordingly, the examiner has failed to establish a basis to restrict under groups II and IV, which restriction must be withdrawn.

The examiner's contentions in para. 13 are clearly erroneous, and the examiner's mere contention that "the method could be performed by hand using index cards and a pencil" lacks credibility for the reasons presented above regarding para. 9.

Claim 22 was nevertheless previously amended to specifically add the computer feature, and thusly render moot the examiner's mere contention of hand-processing.

Yet, in the final office action the examiner has failed to address this change, and has failed to replace the "hand" argument with another; therefore leaving the restriction requirement without any basis whatsoever.

Furthermore, it is noted that apparatus claim 22 is the means-for equivalent of method claim 15 under MPEP 809.03, and should be examined together in the present application.

The examiner has failed to address this position; which should be viewed as an inherent admission by the examiner that the restriction requirement is defective.

MPEP 809.03 lists common types of linking claims, including "(C) a claim to 'means' for practicing a process linking proper apparatus and process claims."

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MPEP 809 states that: "[t]he linking claims must be examined with the invention elected..." (emphasis added).

Yet, the examiner has not examined the so-linked claims.

Note the one-to-one correspondence between the preambles of claims 15 and 22.

Note the one-to-one correspondence between the six method elements of method claim 15 and the corresponding six "means for" elements of apparatus claim 22.

The two claims could not be any better "linked" in accordance with the express MPEP requirements, yet the examiner has failed to comply with those requirements, even after they were expressly brought to his attention.

The group III and IV claims appear sufficiently linked under the applicable MPEP provisions, which should warrant withdrawal of the restriction requirement therefor.

The examiner's four-way restriction requirement contains numerous errors, and is conspicuous in the overly simplistic and cursory evaluation of the applicable restriction requirements, with the examiner showing a predisposition to both narrow the number of claims for examination, and reject the claims without suitable evidentiary, or MPEP, or legal support; resorting to the citation of numerous cases without regard to evaluating the factual or legal basis of those cases.

The four office actions of record are already expansive, and continue the protracted prosecution in which inordinate time has been and will continue to be expended by the examiner, this attorney, the Group Director's office, and the Board of Appeal.

Clearly, reasonable minds may differ, yet experienced minds should be able to resolve those differences in obtaining claims of due scope patentably distinguishable over the references of record, and overcoming issues of restriction.

Perhaps, in the decision on this petition the door may be opened to negotiate a settlement of this application.

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In para. 19 of the 03/27/02 final office action, the examiner stated that two courtesy calls were made to the Applicant "in an effort to allow the application." The examiner indicated the allowability of "claims 34 and 35," yet Applicant is entitled to broader claims, which could be negotiated to overcome the differences of opinion.

The willingness of the USPTO to allow the application is one reason why attempts were made through the various interim supervisors, including supervisor Cuff, to conduct a phone interview to resolve outstanding issues. However, the USPTO chose to cancel the scheduled interview, and instead issue the second final office action, which increased - not decreased - the issues, which has now led to this petition, and will lead to the following appeal(s).

It is the sincere desire of this attorney that the Group Director's involvement in deciding this petition, would also extend to endorsing a telephonic interview between this attorney and the examiner and his supervisor to resolve any remaining issues in an attempt to obviate the need for appeal.

Applicant's claimed invention clearly has **FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES** over the single reference applied, and the examiner is requested to assist in placing the claims in condition for allowance, by suitable negotiation, if required.

Under MPEP 2106, computer-implemented inventions are allowable not for their mere use of the computer per se, but for how that computer is specifically programmed, and distinguishes over the references of record.

In the restriction requirement, due weight to the computer-implemented features has not been accorded; nor in the examination on the merits.

The decision on this petition should therefore promote further cooperation in a negotiated settlement of the rejections of record.

Accordingly, Applicant requests that the restriction requirement be overturned for the above reasons. Following

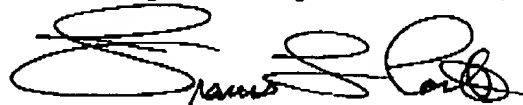
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that decision, Applicant requests that the Group Director remand the application back to the examiner and his supervisor with direction either to enter a new office action with examination of the restricted claims; or to re-schedule the canceled telephonic interview in an attempt to negotiate acceptable claims and avoid the need for appeal.

Furthermore, the examiner has yet to return a duly initialed form PTO-1449 for reference "AR," admittedly reviewed by the examiner in the supplemental office action dated 09/24/02. Applicant therefore also petitions that the examiner return the missing initialed form PTO-1449 in the next office action.

Respectfully submitted,



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Appendix

Remaining claims 1-22 and 31-39:

1. (withdrawn) A computer implemented method of selecting a raw material by a user comprising the steps of:
 querying the user for a user input, wherein the user input comprises a customer application criteria selection and raw material type selection based upon applying a filter of customer application criteria to a list of raw material types, with each of said raw material types having various customer application criteria;
 if said user input is (a) a raw material selection, displaying raw material information; and
 if said user input is (b) a customer application criteria selection, displaying (1) a list of raw material types for user selection filtered by said customer application criteria selection and (2) said customer application criteria selection.
2. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein said customer application criteria comprises print method, adhesive type, minimum temperature for adhesive type, service range of adhesive type, and facestock type.
3. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein said material information comprises master width, areas of concern regarding the material's use, description of facestock, description of adhesive, description of liner, and description of typical applications for which the raw material type selected may be used.
4. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein said raw material is a pressure sensitive material.
5. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising the

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step of:

if the user input is a raw material selection, transmitting said user input to a price quote request system.

6. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

sorting said list of raw material types displayed to said user.

7. (withdrawn) The method of claim 6 wherein the sorting step comprises sorting the raw material type by unit cost.

8. (withdrawn) A computer system for selecting a material by a user comprising:

a processor for receiving and transmitting data; and

a memory coupled to said processor; the memory having stored therein sequences of instructions which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to:

query said user for a user input, wherein said user input comprises a customer application criteria selection and raw material type selection based upon applying a filter of customer application criteria to a list of raw material types, with each of said raw material types having various customer application criteria;

if said user input is a raw material selection, displaying raw material information; and

if said user input is a customer application criteria selection, displaying a filtered list of raw material types for user selection filtered by said customer application criteria selection and said customer application criteria selection.

9. (withdrawn) The computer system of claim 8 wherein said customer application criteria comprises print method, adhesive type, minimum temperature for adhesive type, service range of

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adhesive type, and facestock type.

10. (withdrawn) The computer system of claim 8 wherein said raw material information comprises master width, areas of concern regarding the material's use, description of facestock, description of adhesive, description of liner, and description of typical applications for which the material selected may be used.

11. (withdrawn) The computer system of claim 8 wherein said raw material typed is a pressure sensitive material.

12. (withdrawn) The computer system of claim 8 further comprising sequences of instructions which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to:

if said user input is a raw material selection, transmit said user input to a price quote request system.

13. (withdrawn) The computer system of claim 8 further comprising sequences of instructions which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to:

sort said list of raw material types displayed to said user.

14. (withdrawn) The computer system of claim 13 wherein said sorting comprises sorting said list of raw material types by unit cost.

15. (withdrawn) A computer implemented method of selecting a raw material for manufacturing a product therefrom comprising:

storing in a computer system a list of different raw materials, with each of said raw materials having various customer application criteria stored therewith, and said criteria being indicative of intended application of said raw

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material in a product;

populating a plurality of filter lists corresponding with said stored customer application criteria for said different raw materials;

displaying a material browser including a plurality of filters corresponding with said filter lists;

selecting one of said filter lists and specifying a filter criterion therein;

filtering said list of raw materials to obtain a filtered list thereof matching said filter criterion; and

displaying in said browser said filtered list of raw materials matching said filter criterion.

16. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 15 further comprising displaying also in said browser said various customer application criteria corresponding with each of said raw materials in said filtered list.

17. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 16 further comprising:

selecting a plurality of said filter lists and selecting corresponding filter criterion therefor; and

filtering said list of raw materials to obtain said filtered list thereof matching said filter criteria corresponding with said selected filter lists.

18. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 17 further comprising:

additionally storing with said list of raw materials raw material information corresponding with each of said raw materials including information different than said customer application criteria and information specific to permitted applications of said raw material in a product;

selecting one of said raw materials from said filtered list; and

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displaying in said browser said raw material information corresponding with said selected raw material.

19. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 18 wherein:
said product comprises a pressure sensitive material; and
said raw material information comprises master width, areas of concern regarding use of said selected raw material, description of facestock, description of adhesive, description of liner, and description of typical applications for which said selected raw material may be used.

20. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 17 wherein:
said product comprises a pressure sensitive material; and
said customer application criteria comprises print method, adhesive type, minimum temperature for adhesive type, service range of adhesive type, and facestock type.

21. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 17 further comprising sorting said filtered list by unit cost of said raw materials.

22. (previously amended) An apparatus for selecting a raw material for manufacturing a product therefrom comprising:

means for storing in a computer system a list of different raw materials, with each of said raw materials having various customer application criteria stored therewith, and said criteria being indicative of intended application of said raw material in a product;

means for populating a plurality of filter lists corresponding with said stored customer application criteria for said different raw materials;

means for displaying a material browser including a plurality of filters corresponding with said filter lists;

means for selecting one of said filter lists and specifying a filter criterion therein;

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means for filtering said list of raw materials to obtain a filtered list thereof matching said filter criterion; and said displaying means being further configured for displaying in said browser said filtered list of raw materials matching said filter criterion.

31. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 22 wherein said displaying means are further configured for displaying also in said browser said various customer application criteria corresponding with each of said raw materials in said filtered list.

32. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 31 wherein:

said selecting means are further configured for selecting a plurality of said filter lists and selecting corresponding filter criterion therefor; and

said filtering means are further configured for filtering said list of raw materials to obtain said filtered list thereof matching said filter criteria corresponding with said selected filter lists.

33. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 32 wherein:

said storing means are configured for additionally storing with said list of raw materials raw material information corresponding with each of said raw materials including information different than said customer application criteria and information specific to permitted applications of said raw material in a product;

said selecting means are further configured for selecting one of said raw materials from said filtered list; and

said displaying means are further configured for displaying in said browser said raw material information corresponding with said selected raw material.

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34. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 33 wherein:

said product comprises a pressure sensitive material; and
said raw material information comprises master width, areas of concern regarding use of said selected raw material, description of facestock, description of adhesive, description of liner, and description of typical applications for which said selected raw material may be used.

35. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 32 wherein:

said product comprises a pressure sensitive material; and
said customer application criteria comprises print method, adhesive type, minimum temperature for adhesive type, service range of adhesive type, and facestock type.

36. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 35 wherein said print method comprises cut sheet lap joined, cut sheet laser, direct thermal, thermal transfer, and impact.

37. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 35 wherein said adhesive type comprises permanent, cold temperature, and removable.

38. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 35 wherein said facestock type comprises paper, kimdura, 100# tag, 7 pt tag, 8 pt tag, matte litho, latex impregnated, gloss, matte chrome polyester, bright chrome polyester, clear polyester, white polyester, polyolefin, and vinyl.

39. (previously added) An apparatus according to claim 32 further comprising means for sorting said filtered list by unit cost of said raw materials.